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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

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Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted in response to Assembly resolution 71/127 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/9. The period covered by the report is from January to December 2016.

The report provides an overview of current efforts to improve humanitarian coordination and response and describes major humanitarian trends, challenges and thematic issues.

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I. Introduction

A. Overview of key trends

1. Twenty-five years after the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/182, which strengthened the United Nations preparedness and response to complex emergencies and natural disasters, the importance of effective and principled humanitarian action is greater than ever.

2. The current crises present increasingly complex challenges that have resulted in dramatic levels of humanitarian need. The number, intensity and length of conflicts have displaced an unprecedented number of people who deserve urgent and new approaches. Protracted displacement and the urbanization of conflict call for a shift in strategies. Climate change and changing weather patterns are increasing the frequency, intensity and cost of disasters. Instability and food and water insecurity have become worrying causes of human mobility and rising protection needs.

3. Forced displacement remained at record levels, with more than 65 million people displaced by conflict, violence and persecution around the world. Millions more people were displaced by disasters associated with natural hazards, with an average of more than 25.4 million people displaced each year since 2008.[1] In 2016, 297 natural disasters affected 377 million people and caused $92.4 billion in damage.[2]

4. Persistent disregard for international humanitarian law and international human rights law in 2016 left deep scars on humanity. Parties to conflict attacked civilians and civilian infrastructure and impeded life-saving assistance. Humanitarian workers and medical personnel were killed, injured, threatened, kidnapped and sexually assaulted. The lack of accountability for serious violations of international law has generated a climate of impunity.

5. Global food insecurity reached unprecedented levels by the end of 2016, exacerbated by conflict and the El Niño phenomenon and compounded by climate change. Some 70 million people across 45 countries are estimated to require emergency food assistance in 2017, including more than 20 million people in north-eastern Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen who are facing famine or are at risk of famine.

6. As humanitarian needs escalated in 2016, a growing financial gap limited the response. The United Nations and its partners targeted a record 96.2 million people in 40 countries for humanitarian assistance. Coordinated inter-agency humanitarian appeals were the largest ever, at $22.1 billion. Donors responded with $12.6 billion, the largest provision of humanitarian funding ever, but a 43 per cent funding gap remained.[3]

B. New opportunities

7. The year provided important opportunities for strengthening humanitarian action. The Secretary-General prioritized the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which, with its central pledge to leave no one behind, will help to reduce the factors driving humanitarian crises, reinforced by follow-up

[1] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, "Global report on internal displacement, 2016".
[2] Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters.
[3] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Humanitarian funding update, December 2016".

to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. This is complemented by the Secretary-General's sharpened focus on reviewing the United Nations development system to ensure that it is well positioned to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, strengthening prevention and sustaining peace capacities and prioritizing coherence and collaboration across pillars.

8. With the adoption, in September 2016, of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (General Assembly resolution 71/1), Member States committed to working towards the negotiation of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, to be adopted in 2018, and to support the world's refugees and the communities that host them by adopting a global compact on refugees in 2018. These compacts present major opportunities to address large movements of refugees and migrants and enhance their protection. The Secretary-General's global campaign to counter xenophobia is also critical.

9. The New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), places special attention on urban areas in conflict and countries affected by natural disasters (see General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex).

10. The World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul in May 2016, brought together 9,000 participants from Member States, the United Nations, civil society, financial institutions and the private sector, and mobilized more than 3,000 commitments and initiatives to reduce and prevent suffering and deliver better for affected people, in line with the 24 key transformations of the Agenda for Humanity (see A/70/709, annex, and A/71/353). The Platform for Action, Commitments and Transformation[4] enables stakeholders to share information, voluntarily report on their commitments and mobilize for change.

11. Together, these opportunities strengthen the ability of the United Nations to implement new approaches with a diversity of partners and stakeholders. The new way of working[5] enables humanitarian and development actors to support affected people through collective outcomes that reduce risk, need and vulnerability, and contribute to sustainable development, including as it relates to sustaining peace.

12. The United Nations must put an emphasis on helping countries in preventing crises that lead to massive human suffering, build resilient societies and institutions and establish conditions for sustainable development and sustaining peace. We know that preventing crises is much less costly and more effective than reacting to it. We know that crises, whether man-made or natural, can reverse development gains.

13. The scale and complexity of the current humanitarian crises require the humanitarian ecosystem to continue adapting to enhance humanitarian assistance and protection. Just as it has over the past 25 years, strong humanitarian action and effective humanitarian coordination with a growing multiplicity of actors will remain paramount, and respect for the humanitarian principles and General Assembly resolution 46/182 will be more critical than ever.

[4] Available from: www.agendaforhumanity.org.

[5] The new way of working was adopted in May 2016 in a joint commitment to action signed by the former Secretary-General and eight United Nations humanitarian and development entities and endorsed by the World Bank and the International Organization for Migration (see A/71/329, para. 31).

II. Overview of humanitarian emergencies in 2016

A. Complex emergencies

14. In 2016, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners responded to a record four Level 3 emergencies[6] (Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, Iraq and South Sudan) and a number of other crises.

15. In the Syrian Arab Republic, since 2011, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed, 6.3 million have been internally displaced and nearly 4.8 million refugees have left the country. In 2016, inside the Syrian Arab Republic, some 13.5 million people needed humanitarian assistance, including 5.8 million children. Some 4 million people were living in hard-to-reach areas, of which 643,780 were trapped in besieged areas. Protection of civilians remained a grave concern; 164 reported attacks damaged hospitals and health-care centres, at least 47 attacks were reported on education facilities and personnel, and attacks against humanitarian workers and convoys continued.

16. The crisis in Yemen worsened, with 7,469 civilians killed, 40,483 wounded and 12.6 million people targeted for humanitarian assistance. Approximately 3.1 million people were displaced, of whom 1 million have returned home. An estimated 14 million people were food insecure. Humanitarian assistance reached over 5.6 million Yemenis, notwithstanding severe insecurity, access restrictions and bureaucratic impediments imposed by the parties to the conflict.

17. In Iraq, 2016 saw nine major military campaigns and the displacement of nearly 700,000 people. Of the 4.5 million people displaced since the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in 2014, more than 3 million remain internally displaced, while nearly 1.5 million have returned to areas retaken by the Government, where many depend on humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian assistance reached 5.8 million people.

18. In South Sudan, the humanitarian situation worsened. By year's end, 3.2 million South Sudanese had been displaced. More than 760,000 people fled the country, bringing the number of refugees in neighbouring countries to more than 1.4 million. More than 1.8 million people were internally displaced, including 222,273 people sheltering in United Nations protection of civilians sites. Some 4.8 million people were severely food insecure. The protection of civilians remained a grave concern. More than 5.1 million people received assistance, but humanitarian efforts were severely challenged owing to insecurity and obstacles put in place by the parties to the conflict.

19. In Libya, an estimated 1.3 million people required humanitarian assistance. Health-care systems continued to deteriorate, with more than 50 per cent of health facilities partially or not functional. Ninety per cent of the more than 181,000 migrants who arrived in Italy by sea in 2016 departed from Libya; 5,096 people who attempted the crossing were reported dead or missing. Those who arrived reported exploitation, abuse and torture in Libya, including widespread rape and sexual violence, including by groups affiliated with ISIL.

20. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 1.8 million Palestinians were in need of humanitarian assistance. In 2016, a record 1,093 buildings were demolished and more 1,600 people were displaced. Several factors, among them restrictions on

[6] The declaration of an Inter-Agency Standing Committee Humanitarian System-Wide Emergency Activation ("Level 3(L3)" response) activates system-wide mobilization to enable accelerated and scaled-up delivery of assistance and protection to people in the most severe, large-scale humanitarian crises.

movement and access, including for humanitarian personnel, continued to undermine livelihoods and access to services, especially in Gaza.

21. In Burundi, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance increased from 1.1 million to 3 million, including 1.2 million children. Protection needs almost doubled, reaching 1.8 million people.

22. In the Sudan, protracted displacement and widespread protection concerns persisted in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. There were an estimated 3.2 million internally displaced persons across the country. At least 97,000 people were newly displaced by the conflict in Darfur. In South Kordofan and Blue Nile, hundreds of thousands of civilians remained inaccessible to humanitarian agencies. Continued violence and worsening food insecurity in South Sudan drove more than 130,000 refugees into the Sudan.

23. In the Central African Republic, 2.3 million people required humanitarian assistance. At the end of 2016, there were 411,785 internally displaced persons and some 462,154 refugees had fled the country. Attacks on civilians, especially the displaced, constituted a major protection challenge.

24. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the humanitarian situation deteriorated, affecting 7.5 million people and the total number of internally displaced persons rose to 2.1 million. Some 553,896 Congolese remained in African countries as refugees at the end of 2016. Some 3.4 million people were acutely food insecure, including 1.9 million severely malnourished children. The humanitarian response continued to be hampered by constraints on access.

25. In Somalia, the humanitarian situation worsened. Some 5 million people needed assistance and 300,000 children under the age of 5 were malnourished. Ongoing conflict and existing vulnerabilities compounded a severe drought, which could cause a famine in 2017. Attacks by terrorist groups and non-State armed actors continued, particularly from Al-Shabaab, resulting in civilian casualties and hampering the delivery of aid.

26. Violence related to Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria and parts of Cameroon, Chad and the Niger left some 10.7 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, including 2.3 million people forced to flee their homes and 515,000 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. Gross human rights violations and sexual and gender-based violence remained a major concern.

27. In Ukraine, the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements failed to secure a lasting cessation of hostilities, resulting in growing humanitarian needs. By the end of 2016, an estimated 3.8 million people in eastern Ukraine were in need of humanitarian assistance, and their protection remained a key concern. Some 2.9 million of them lived in areas not under Government control, while pockets of humanitarian needs also existed in Government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk States.

28. In Afghanistan, intensifying conflict caused displacement, both internally and across borders, and record numbers of civilian casualties that disproportionately affected children. More than 650,000 Afghans were newly internally displaced in 2016, the highest figure on record. At least 50 per cent of new displaced persons have not returned home, increasing the number of Afghans living in prolonged displacement to more than 1.2 million. In addition, 2016 saw the unprecedented return of some 620,000 Afghans from Pakistan.

29. In Myanmar, the humanitarian situation deteriorated significantly. In addition to almost 1 million stateless people, mostly Rohingya, approximately 218,000 people, of whom 80 per cent were women and children, remained displaced in

Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States. Armed conflict in Kachin and northern Shan States led to new displacements. Intense security operations triggered a humanitarian emergency with tens of thousands displaced in northern Rakhine and some 65,000 Rohingya people fleeing into Bangladesh reporting grave human rights violations.

30. In the Philippines, armed conflict in Mindanao between the Government and non-State armed groups, as well as violence between local clans, displaced more than 250,000 people, of which more than 75,000 people remained displaced.

31. Serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law by parties to conflicts continued or increased in many of these complex emergencies, and restrictions on access were prevalent.

B. Disasters associated with natural hazards

32. The El Niño episode of 2015/16 caused drought, flooding and severe storms, prompting 23 countries to seek humanitarian assistance for more than 60 million people. Changes in temperature and precipitation had an impact on food security and access to water and made 2016 the warmest year on record. The appointment of the Special Envoys on the Secretary-General on El Niño and Climate sought to mobilize attention, develop strategies to mitigate the impact of future episodes and encourage better preparedness and early action to forecasted extreme events.

33. While the El Niño episode ended in May 2016, East and Southern Africa are expected to feel its effects well into 2017. Among those requiring aid are nearly 3 million people in Somalia at risk of famine owing to prolonged drought and ongoing conflict. Ethiopia was the country most affected by El Niño in 2016, with 10.2 million people targeted for assistance at the peak of the drought. 2016 witnessed the worst drought in Southern Africa in 35 years, leaving 41 million people food insecure. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) led a region-wide response and the United Nations and partners supported SADC in developing a regional drought appeal for $2.9 billion to aid 28 million people and establishing a regional logistics and coordination centre. In the Sahel, more than 30 million people struggled with food insecurity.

34. In Central America, more than 4.2 million people were affected by drought conditions linked to El Niño. In Haiti, Hurricane Matthew displaced 175,000 people and 1.4 million people required humanitarian assistance. An earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 hit north-western Ecuador, killing 659 people, displacing 29,067 and causing damage estimated between $2 billion and $3 billion.

35. Asia and the Pacific experienced a number of devastating events, including El Niño, which severely impacted 11 countries. Tropical Cyclone Winston caused widespread damage in Fiji. Tropical Storm Roanu caused the worst flooding in 25 years in Sri Lanka. Monsoonal flooding in Myanmar temporarily displaced more half a million people. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, severe flooding from Typhoon Lionrock killed 130 people and left 600,000 in need of assistance. Typhoons Sarika and Haima temporarily displaced more than 2 million people in the Philippines, while Typhoon Nock-Ten affected 2.8 million people and damaged nearly 400,000 houses.

C. Coordination for health emergencies

36. Health emergencies in 2016, including the end of the Ebola virus disease crisis in June, the yellow fever outbreak in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the

Congo, the cholera outbreak in Uganda and the Zika epidemic in the Americas and beyond, highlighted the continued need to build a cross-sectoral health emergency response capacity and strengthen the interface between humanitarian and public health communities, including regional, national, local and community capacities. Stronger financing is also needed, including for the Zika Response and Cholera Response Multi-partner Trust Funds in Haiti. In December 2016, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee endorsed procedures for Level 3 activation of the humanitarian system for infectious disease events.

III. Delivering better for people — meeting needs and reducing need, risk and vulnerability

A. Upholding the norms — serving people in need

Respect for international law and accountability

37. In 2016, the level of brutality and erosion of respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law was devastating and the fundamental rules of distinction, proportionality and precaution were too often flouted. Civilians were deliberately or indiscriminately injured and killed with shocking frequency and intensity. Populations in besieged areas were starved, intimidated and deprived of essential goods. Hospitals, schools, water facilities, places of worship and other civilian infrastructure were attacked. Unlawful impediments to humanitarian access led to death, illness and starvation.

38. These violations will also have a crippling effect on the recovery and reconstruction of societies long after conflict ends. Conspicuously absent is accountability for serious violations, fostering a climate of impunity and undermining international humanitarian law.

39. An intensified global effort to enhance the protection of civilians and other protected persons in armed conflict is needed to strengthen respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Member States should use their influence to ensure the protection of civilians, improve compliance and end impunity for serious violations.

Centrality of protection

40. The United Nations and humanitarian actors have a responsibility to place protection at the centre of humanitarian action at all stages.[7] Following a whole-of-system review, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee issued in 2016 its Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action, which emphasizes the commitment to prioritize protection, highlights collective roles and responsibilities on protection and underlines the need to implement this commitment in all aspects of humanitarian action and across the humanitarian programme cycle.

41. The United Nations and humanitarian actors continued translating the centrality of protection into practice, including through the Inter-Agency Protection Standby Capacity project, deploying 21 senior protection advisers to 12 countries and three regional offices to assist senior humanitarian leadership in developing protection strategies and training field personnel.

[7] "The centrality of protection in humanitarian section", statement by the principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, endorsed in 2013.

Child protection

42. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Child Protection Area of Responsibility under the Global Protection Cluster focused on addressing the risks that girls and boys face in conflicts and natural disasters, including guidance on how to identify children at risk as early as possible and addressing their gender-specific needs. Child protection is integral to protection efforts and the best interest of the child must guide all humanitarian actions involving children. Scaled-up investments in essential child protection services and local coordination mechanisms are needed to ensure the necessary quality and coverage of response to issues such as family separation, psychological distress and sexual exploitation.

Gender-based violence

43. Gender-based violence is a human rights, protection and health issue, and its continued prevalence is a deeply concerning pattern. Conflict-related sexual violence has been used as a deliberate form of persecution and constitutes a violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action detail minimum interventions for prevention and response. Experts in the Global Protection Cluster and experts on gender-based violence are working to ensure that prevention, mitigation and response are better integrated in humanitarian response plans.

44. Comprehensive support to survivors is crucial, including medical, psychological and rehabilitation services, partnership with local women's groups and strengthening the capacity of national institutions. A coordinated global approach to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in crisis, including through the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies, was a dominant theme of the World Humanitarian Summit, and must be continued.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

45. Prioritizing the zero-tolerance policy for acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian personnel, in 2016 the principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee endorsed joint standard operating procedures, which are being rolled out in the field. They also endorsed the Best Practice Guide on Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse and improve access to reporting mechanisms and services. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee took steps to reinforce the responsibility and capacity of humanitarian coordinators on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, including this topic in the annual compact of the Humanitarian Coordinator with the Emergency Relief Coordinator and committing that protection from sexual exploitation and abuse be a standing agenda item at the annual retreat of the humanitarian coordinators. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee is also working closely with other relevant United Nations actors across the system to reinforce the Secretary-General's strategy on fighting sexual exploitation and abuse (see A/71/818).

Humanitarian access

46. Tens of millions of women, men and children affected by conflicts and natural disasters rely on life-saving assistance and protection. The humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence must be fully respected and promoted. Yet, too often obstacles have hampered the ability of humanitarian organizations to reach the most vulnerable.

47. Parties to the conflict must adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law and must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access to people in need, wherever they are. This includes not arbitrarily withholding consent to relief operations.

48. Humanitarians continue to operate in places where once they may not have stayed and humanitarian operations remain risky and complex endeavours. Efforts to build acceptance of humanitarian action by all parties are critical to gain and maintain humanitarian access, especially as most current armed conflicts are non-international and there is a multiplicity of non-State armed groups. The recent study, entitled "Presence and proximity: to stay and deliver, five years on",[8] reaffirms the importance of acceptance, engagement with all parties and a principled approach.

49. Mines, explosives remnants of war and improvised explosive devices continue to impede humanitarian access.

Protecting humanitarian workers

50. In situations of armed conflict, all parties must respect and protect humanitarian workers and assets. Humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) make an indispensable contribution to humanitarian response. Staff from national and local NGOs are particularly vulnerable and often carry great risk with the least protection. In a number of ongoing conflicts, parties have failed to take all feasible precautions to spare humanitarian workers and assets, and have, in some cases, purposely targeted them. As a result, humanitarian workers were killed or injured, causing the suspension or withdrawal of humanitarian operations, depriving entire communities of assistance.

51. Preliminary records from the Aid Worker Security Database show that 208 aid workers were killed, kidnapped or seriously wounded in 2016, with kidnapping being the most common (63 incidents). Casualties caused by aerial attacks (primarily on health facilities) continue at very high levels, killing or injuring 22 people. Almost 80 per cent of the victims (165 of 208) were national staff.

52. Efforts to further integrate security into programming, build acceptance and ensure duty of care for humanitarian personnel should continue to be adequately funded, with particular attention to national staff and partners.[9]

53. Member States and humanitarian organizations must enhance training for armed forces, armed groups and humanitarian staff on humanitarian principles and applicable international humanitarian law. Member States should ensure that their domestic laws guarantee the respect and protection for humanitarian personnel and assets. Humanitarian actors should increase dialogue with local communities and impartial and neutral engagement with all parties. Critically, Member States must put an end to widespread impunity.

Protecting medical care in conflict

54. The killing and maiming of medical personnel and patients, threats against medical personnel, the destruction of medical facilities and assets and other violent impediments to the delivery of medical care have become a reprehensible feature of the current armed conflicts. In 2014 and 2015, there were 594 reported attacks on health care that resulted in 959 deaths and 1,561 injuries in 19 countries with

[8] This follows up on the report entitled "To stay and deliver: good practice for humanitarians in complex security environments", published by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in 2011.

[9] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "To stay and deliver: good practice for humanitarians in complex security environments", 2011.

emergencies.[10] In many contexts, conflict-related violence has severely curtailed access to medical care and dramatically impaired long-term national health capacities.

55. In May 2016, the Security Council adopted resolution 2286 (2016), its first resolution dedicated exclusively to the protection of medical care in armed conflict, in which it reaffirmed existing norms and demanded their full implementation. In his recommendations, submitted pursuant to paragraph 13 of resolution 2286 (2016), on measures to prevent acts of violence, attacks and threats against the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities, and to better ensure accountability and enhance their protection (see S/2016/722, annex), the Secretary-General defined concrete measures to take and called upon Member States to report on steps taken to implement the resolution. Member States and parties to conflict have the primary responsibility to take action to translate this landmark resolution into effective protection.

Reducing the impact of urban hostilities on civilians

56. Armed conflicts are increasingly being fought in towns and cities and other populated areas, such as refugee and displaced persons camps, with particularly devastating effects for civilians when they involve the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects. Globally, 45,603 deaths and injuries by explosive weapons were recorded in 2016; 70 per cent of the victims were civilians. When explosive weapons were used in populated areas, 92 per cent of deaths and injuries involved civilians.[11] The use of explosive weapons in populated areas causes predictable, widespread and long-term harm, including the destruction of housing, schools, hospitals, access routes and essential services. It has led to forced and often protracted displacement, the loss of livelihoods and development opportunities and the continuing threat of explosive remnants of war. Parties to conflict should avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, and Member States are encouraged to engage constructively in efforts to develop a political declaration on this issue.

Adverse consequences of counter-terrorism measures

57. Counter-terrorism measures continue to have an impact on principled humanitarian action, including domestic laws that may criminalize humanitarian activities, counter-terrorism clauses that run contrary to humanitarian principles and disincentives for the financial sector to provide services to NGO operations in so-called high-risk countries. While humanitarian actors must continue efforts to limit the risk of aid diversion, Member States should adapt counter-terrorism frameworks to mitigate potential humanitarian impact — for example, through humanitarian exemptions in sanctions regimes and national legislation — and to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law. The Financial Action Task Force recommended that counter-terrorism measures should be proportionate, not disrupt or discourage legitimate activities and be implemented in a manner that respects the Charter of the United Nations and international human rights law.

[10] World Health Organization, "Report on attacks on health care in emergencies", 2016.

[11] Figures provided by Action on Armed Violence

B. Leaving no one behind

Displacement and protracted crises

Reducing and addressing forced displacement

58. The magnitude and protracted nature of forced displacement pose enormous political, operational and financial challenges. Displaced people are increasingly settling outside of camps, including in informal settlements and urban areas. Addressing forced displacement requires a collective response that focuses not only on meeting the immediate humanitarian needs of displaced populations, but also on reducing social exclusion, marginalization and discrimination, while preserving dignity and strengthening self-reliance.

59. Several initiatives have generated new momentum towards such a collective response to forced displacement: the 2030 Agenda recognized that addressing forced displacement is part of sustainable development; the New Urban Agenda committed to supporting host cities; and the Agenda for Humanity called for a new way of working to reduce need, risk and vulnerability, thereby enhancing support to displaced people and host communities.

60. Closer partnerships between humanitarian and development actors and international financial institutions will be important to support affected communities, help to address the root causes of displacement, prevent further fragility and create durable solutions. Work has already begun between the United Nations and other partners, including the World Bank, to make progress in this regard.

61. The number of refugees globally had, by mid-2016, reached an unprecedented 21.7 million.[12] More support must be provided to host Governments and communities and more advocacy efforts undertaken so that national development plans incorporate refugees as well. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants calls for UNHCR, in close coordination with relevant States, including host countries, and involving other relevant United Nations entities, to develop and initiate the practical application of the comprehensive refugee response framework to better meet challenges posed by large movements of refugees, with the objectives of easing pressure on host communities, enhancing refugee self-reliance, expanding access to third country solutions and supporting conditions in countries of origin for voluntary return in safety and dignity. By the end of 2016, Somalia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda had agreed to become the first countries to apply the comprehensive framework.

62. National authorities have the primary duty and responsibility towards internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction and more support needs to be provided to national and local authorities to include the displaced in development plans. Member States should continue to work towards the development, ratification and full implementation of regional frameworks, national policies and legal frameworks on internal displacement, which uphold the rights of displaced persons and the corresponding obligations of States, on the basis of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The Emergency Relief Coordinator has the central role for the coordination of, protection of, and assistance to, displaced persons, among other means, through the inter-agency cluster system. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants noted the need for reflection on effective strategies to ensure adequate protection and assistance for displaced persons and to prevent and reduce

[12] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Mid-year trends 2016", 2016; and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, "UNRWA in figures 2016", 2017.

such displacement. The Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity also called for working towards a target of 50 per cent reduction in displacement by 2030.

Displacement in the context of disasters and climate change

63. Population growth, urbanization and environmental degradation have made humans more vulnerable to disasters, while climate change has contributed to the increased frequency and intensity of some natural hazards. In 2016, the Platform on Disaster Displacement was launched to implement the Nansen Initiative,[13] to help Member States to better prevent, prepare for and respond to displacement in the context of disasters. The Task Force on Displacement related to climate change was also established by the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Migrants in vulnerable situations

64. Too often migrants caught in humanitarian crises face overwhelming challenges, including abuse, exploitation, the lack of access to services and loss of life. In 2016, more than 7,500 migrants died along migratory routes worldwide[14] and there was a significant rise in anti-migrant, xenophobic sentiment. Climate change, the degradation of natural resources and food insecurity exacerbate some drivers of migration, including violence, poverty and unemployment. The unique needs of migrants in humanitarian crises require tailored humanitarian assistance alongside specific support for protection.

65. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants commits Member States to develop and adopt a global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration, in 2018. The World Humanitarian Summit called for enhanced cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination. In June 2016, the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative released the Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster to address needs. Efforts towards meeting the humanitarian needs of all affected people, regardless of their status, are imperative. On 9 March 2017, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of Louise Arbour as his Special Representative for International Migration. The Special Representative will lead the work with Member States, in partnership with relevant United Nations entities and other stakeholders, as they develop a first-ever global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration.

Empowering and protecting women and girls

Gender equality and women's empowerment

66. Recognizing and addressing the differing needs, priorities and capacities of women, girls, boys and men and promoting gender equality is critical in humanitarian action. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee developed the Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action and is carrying out deployments through the Gender Standby Capacity Project. Increased funding for local and national women's groups, including through country-based pooled funds, is another important vehicle for empowerment. The Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, a pooled funding mechanism launched in 2016, enhances the capacity of local women to respond to emergencies. Cash for work and

[13] Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change, the Nansen Initiative, 2015.

[14] International Organization for Migration, Missing Migrants Project, latest global figures, 2016.

livelihood opportunities in humanitarian settings are also increasingly used as a way of empowering women.

67. Humanitarian partners should operationalize existing policies and commitments, including by deploying more gender experts and systematically gathering and using disaggregated data in the humanitarian programme cycle. Increased accountability mechanisms are essential, as is increased funding to gender equality programming, as called for at the World Humanitarian Summit.

Sexual and reproductive health

68. Ensuring that women and girls of reproductive age have access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services in humanitarian contexts remains vital. The availability of the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health is a priority at the onset of emergencies.

69. The Secretary-General's Every Woman, Every Child campaign reiterates that an estimated 60 per cent of preventable maternal deaths, 53 per cent of deaths under the age of 5 and 45 per cent of neonatal deaths occur in settings of conflict, displacement and natural disasters. Investing in stronger and more resilient health systems is essential, as is creating trust between communities and health systems to bridge gaps in access to and funding for the delivery of reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health services.

Ensuring education for all in crises

70. Nearly one in four of the 109.2 million school-age children in conflict-affected countries are not attending school. Large gaps in education can greatly hinder a country's ability to recover from conflict and achieve sustainable development. Moreover, education plays a critical protection role as out-of-school children are at increased risk of abuse, exploitation and recruitment by armed groups. In 2016, donors made new efforts to fill funding shortfalls, particularly through the Education Cannot Wait funding initiative, launched at the World Humanitarian Summit, which aims to reach $3.85 billion by 2020 to deliver education to 75 million children in crisis-affected countries. The Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict underscore the importance of protecting students, personnel and schools.

Accountability to affected people

71. The United Nations and its partners should continue promoting approaches on accountability and community engagement in which communities receive timely and coherent information and have access to complaint and feedback mechanisms, and decision makers act on feedback to improve targeting so that needs and rights are upheld. The Humanitarian Information Service, launched during the response to Hurricane Matthew in Haiti, is one such tool. Significant commitments were made at the World Humanitarian Summit to reinforce accountability and engagement, including in the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing.[15]

Advancing inclusion

72. At the World Humanitarian Summit, important progress was made towards advancing inclusion with the endorsement of the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action and the adoption of the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, which require continued commitment.

[15] "The Grand Bargain on efficiency — a shared commitment to better serve people in need", 2016.

C. Working differently to reduce need, risk and vulnerability

Reinforcing national and local capacity

73. National and local actors, including governments, local authorities, the Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies, civil society and local and national NGOs, are often the first to respond to crises and remain in the communities they serve. The international humanitarian response must remain adaptable and context-specific to reinforce national and local capacity, wherever possible. Reinforcing national and local capacity was a major element of the Agenda for Humanity and the World Humanitarian Summit, with almost 400 commitments made. The Charter for Change[16] is a framework for advancing locally led NGO partnerships, and the Urban Crisis Charter of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises calls for the empowerment of local authorities. The Grand Bargain calls for building the capacity of and providing direct funding for local and national actors.

74. The United Nations and its partners continue to strengthen regional, national and local capacity to respond to crisis, including through trainings, secondments and partnerships that build preparedness and response capacity. Regional organizations are increasingly playing an important role in preparing for and responding to humanitarian challenges, including in partnership with each other and the United Nations. Multi-partner initiatives, including the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative and the new Global Preparedness Partnership, have been established and strengthened.

Anticipating crises and managing risks

Data and risk analysis

75. Improved collection, sharing and analysis of data disaggregated by gender, age and disability made available through widely accessible formats — with appropriate privacy protections — are needed to improve humanitarian assistance and enable sound joint analysis. Building on the work of the Humanitarian Data Exchange, a centre for humanitarian data is being established to support a data-driven and evidence-based humanitarian system.

76. The new web platform of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking Service was launched in early 2017, improving transparency and enabling tracking from donors to affected people. More actors are embracing digital technologies such as mobile data collection (e.g., KoBo Toolbox) to support quality and timely data collection. In 2016, the multi-stakeholder Index for Risk Management (INFORM) initiative promoted open-source risk analysis and supported countries and organizations in developing and implementing risk models and training focal points.

Preparedness, early warning and early action

77. By early 2017, the approach taken by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Emergency Response Preparedness, which enhances the understanding of risks and improves preparedness, was being implemented in 68 countries. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness improved its capacity to provide warning at the global level and is sharing its analysis, as appropriate, with the development and peacebuilding communities.

[16] "Charter for Change: localization of humanitarian aid", 2016.

78. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs are co-leading a multi-stakeholder process to develop inter-agency standard operating procedures to coordinate early action in response to early warning of future El Niño/La Niña events. Advances in technology and inter-agency collaboration have also improved early warning and preparedness. The World Food Programme (WFP) mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping project tracks trends in food security through mobile technology and provides real-time data. To better anticipate and respond to climate risks, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and WFP have worked with local partners to implement forecast-based financing initiatives.

Strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus — new way of working

79. The importance of closer cooperation between development, humanitarian and other actors, in coordination with Member States, is widely recognized. The new way of working outlines a path to not merely meet, but to also reduce risk, need and vulnerability through coordinated and coherent action around collective outcomes, on the basis of joint analysis and joined-up planning and programming and drawing on the comparative advantage of a diverse set of actors. This must be pursued in a manner that fully respects humanitarian principles and is context-specific. The new way of working will enable the United Nations and its partners to deliver shared results over a multi-year horizon in a manner that contributes to sustainable development and achieving the 2030 Agenda, including sustaining peace, where the context permits.

80. Further system-wide implementation and the review of tools and processes must now take place to support the achievement of collective outcomes in different contexts. United Nations agencies have begun taking steps for greater coherence and adapting their strategic planning to support the 2030 Agenda.

81. These efforts demonstrate that working across silos is possible and requires sustained effort and adaptation to the context-specific drivers of crisis. Better joined-up planning and programming, including between multi-year humanitarian response plans, the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and other development planning frameworks, will continue to be important. Particularly in fragile and protracted contexts, a boost in development action to help people become self-reliant as quickly as possible and build resilience to future shocks is important. This will require more risk tolerance, earlier engagement and more flexible and context-adaptable programming. Better aligning financing instruments and working with a diversity of partners will be needed.

Developments in the humanitarian programme cycle

82. In 2016, important advances were made in the humanitarian programme cycle. The quality of needs analysis in humanitarian needs overviews continued to improve, including through single assessments that define humanitarian caseloads and rank needs severity, and led to better targeted and prioritized humanitarian response plans. More multi-year humanitarian plans were developed and joint analysis was conducted to address chronic vulnerabilities, while ensuring respect for humanitarian principles. In line with the commitments made in the Grand Bargain, local response capacities are being identified and assisted to engage in and/or lead response coordination. Humanitarian country teams are seeking to increase the use of cash grants, especially multi-purpose grants, wherever the context is appropriate, and integrate cash as a possible response modality.

83. Inter-agency humanitarian evaluations continue to be an important source of evidence-based information to improve the performance of humanitarian response, and to increase transparency and accountability, especially to affected people.

Strengthening the role of the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator

84. Humanitarian coordination leadership is fundamental to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee system. Humanitarian coordinators are designated by the Emergency Relief Coordinator on behalf of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to lead principled humanitarian action in the most complex and protracted contexts. Supported by the humanitarian country team, the humanitarian coordinators, among other things, ensure a common strategic vision for collective humanitarian action in-country, as set out in humanitarian response plans or their equivalent.

85. Empowering the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, supported by the United Nations country team and the humanitarian country team, will assist in bringing together actors at the strategic level to achieve collective outcomes that reduce risk, need and vulnerability in a number of priority areas over multi-year time frames, while maintaining distinct structures for principled humanitarian action, in line with General Assembly resolution 46/182.

86. Especially in protracted crises situations, by using convening authority, resident and humanitarian coordinators can promote joint analysis and joined-up planning to achieve measureable progress in a number of priority areas over multi-year time frames. They can leverage the relative strengths of a wide range of actors and improve strategic engagement across pillars and with civil society and private sector partners to address development deficits or other drivers of need.

Cash-based transfers

87. Cash-based transfers are increasingly being used to deliver assistance during humanitarian crises, and should be scaled up or maximized. Such transfers, in particular multipurpose or unrestricted cash, offer greater choice, flexibility and dignity to affected people. Where context permits, cash-based assistance can generate market activity, restart livelihoods and support access to services. Cash-based transfers can improve efficiency and should be the preferred and default modality where contextually and operationally appropriate, complemented by vouchers and in-kind support when necessary. The humanitarian community must continue to develop and document good practices, including criteria for when cash-based programming is appropriate.

Responding to emergencies in urban areas

88. The urban environment presents particular challenges for humanitarian prevention, preparedness and response activities. Member States and humanitarian and development actors should intensify efforts to work with the national and local authorities in urban settings to build their capacity to better prepare for and respond to crises and work to improve community resilience, in line with the New Urban Agenda and the Urban Crisis Charter of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises.

Strengthening human resources capacity

89. Effective humanitarian action requires the timely deployment of staff and assets. The United Nations continues to strengthen the timely recruitment and deployment of skilled and experienced humanitarian staff, while remaining committed to gender balance and geographical diversity.

D. Investing in humanity — strengthening financing

Optimizing existing financing tools

Central Emergency Response Fund

90. The Central Emergency Response Fund is a critical enabler of fast, effective and life-saving humanitarian action, helping humanitarian actors to kick-start or sustain operations in sudden onset and protracted crises through swift, unearmarked and needs-based funding. In 2016, the Fund received $426.3 million in voluntary contributions from 50 Member States and allocated funding to 47 countries, through rapid response and underfunded emergency grants. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund, which works in complementarity with the Central Emergency Response Fund, provided CHF 15.9 million to Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies.

91. In December 2016, the General Assembly endorsed an expansion of the Central Emergency Response Fund, from $450 million to $1 billion by 2018. Reaching $1 billion for the Fund is a priority, as it will enable the Fund and bolster global contingency financing for responding to shocks and underfunded crises.

Country-based pooled funds

92. In 2016, country-based pooled funds managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs financed life-saving aid to millions in 17 of the world's worst humanitarian crises through timely allocations prioritized under the leadership of the humanitarian coordinators. With more than $706 million from 21 Member States, contributions reached record levels for a third consecutive year.

93. In the Agenda for Humanity, it was urged that the overall portion of coordinated appeal funding channelled through country-based pooled funds be increased to 15 per cent by 2018. Almost 18 per cent of the funding provided to humanitarian partners by country-based pooled funds in 2016 went directly to national NGOs (compared with 2.1 per cent of international humanitarian funding globally).

Innovative financing

94. The Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing and the World Humanitarian Summit encouraged the humanitarian system to diversify and make smarter use of funding, broaden the donor base and "move from funding to financing" by complementing grants with a wide array of financing tools, including concessional loans, risk insurance and bonds.

95. Examples of innovation in 2016 include the first Humanitarian Impact Bond, launched by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Government of Belgium. The African Risk Capacity provides weather-related sovereign risk insurance. The Start Network, WFP and IFRC use insurance and catastrophe bonds. The R4 Rural Resilience Initiative is supporting improved resource management and access to microinsurance, credit and savings.

96. The World Bank, through its 18th replenishment of the International Development Association, allocated more than $75 billion to the 77 poorest countries for the next three years, with an additional $2 billion to support refugees and host communities. This injection of financing shows promise in addressing some root causes of crises.

97. Strengthening new and existing bilateral, regional and international partnerships is important to help to close the resource gap and diversify the resource

base, including with large and fast-growing economies and middle-income countries. Beyond financing, the multi-stakeholder Connecting Business initiative is looking at how the private sector can be engaged before, during and after a crisis.

Increasing efficiency and transparency

98. In 2016, substantial efforts were made to improve humanitarian financing through changes outlined in the Grand Bargain, which aims to move from a supply-driven to a demand-driven model. It highlights the need for new and existing partners, including the private sector and non-traditional donors, to get more means into the hands of affected people and provide more predictable and flexible financing. Donors need to follow through on commitments with regard to, among others, more timely and multi-year funding, reduced earmarking and more harmonized and simplified reporting requirements.

IV. Recommendations

99. **On the basis of the foregoing, the Secretary-General recommends the following:**

(a) **Member States, non-State armed groups and humanitarian organizations should intensify efforts to promote and ensure full respect for and adherence to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence;**

(b) **The United Nations, Member States and all parties to armed conflict should, with urgency, take all measures necessary to promote and ensure respect for international humanitarian law to enhance the protection of civilians;**

(c) **Member States and non-State armed groups should take all measures necessary to enhance their respect for the fundamental international humanitarian law rules of distinction, proportionality and precautions, including by developing operational policies on the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas;**

(d) **Member States and non-State armed groups should respect and protect humanitarian workers and assets, including by refraining from directing attacks against them and taking all feasible precautions to spare them from the effects of hostilities, and Member States should take all measures necessary to ensure that their domestic laws guarantee respect and protection for humanitarian workers and assets;**

(e) **Member States should investigate and ensure accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law perpetrated by all parties to armed conflict — including attacks directed against civilians, medical personnel, facilities and their transport, as well as humanitarian workers and assets, and the wilful deprivation of items necessary for survival — by pursuing all national and international options;**

(f) **Member States and non-State armed groups should stop the military use and targeting of hospitals, schools, places of worship and other civilian infrastructure;**

(g) **Member States and parties to armed conflict must ensure the full implementation of their international legal obligations pertaining to the protection of the wounded and sick and medical personnel, facilities, equipment and transport, and should adopt and effectively implement measures, such as**

those defined in the Secretary-General's recommendations pursuant to Security Council resolution 2286 (2016);

(h) Member States should share information on measures taken to prevent, mitigate or remedy the impact of conflict on medical care, with a view to identifying lessons learned and best practices, in line with the Secretary-General's recommendations pursuant to resolution 2286 (2016);

(i) Member States and non-State armed groups must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access;

(j) Member States should ensure clear, simple and expedited procedures for the entry and deployment of humanitarian personnel and goods;

(k) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should continue to place protection at the centre of humanitarian action to maximize protection outcomes;

(l) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should incorporate the safety and protection needs of migrants in vulnerable situations into humanitarian response activities;

(m) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian and development organizations should seek to ensure the international protection and respect for the rights of refugees, including respect for the principle of non-refoulement and adequate standards of treatment, in accordance with international law, including the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, regional refugee instruments and international human rights obligations;

(n) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian and development organizations should take stock of the current barriers and obstacles that affect support for internally displaced persons in the short and long term, and develop and implement effective strategies to ensure comprehensive protection and assistance for the displaced and prevent and reduce such displacement;

(o) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian and development organizations should prevent and measurably reduce internal displacement in a safe and dignified manner and work towards durable solutions for internally displaced persons; to this aim, they should redouble their efforts and identify opportunities for cooperation, including with international financial institutions, to work towards collective outcomes and in multi-year frameworks to address protracted displacement, promote the self-reliance of displaced persons and build host community resilience;

(p) Member States should support and work towards the development, ratification and full implementation of regional frameworks, national policies and legal frameworks on internal displacement, on the basis of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement;

(q) Member States, the United Nations, international organizations and civil society should invest in early warning systems, disaster preparedness and response coordination to prevent and reduce displacement induced by natural hazards;

(r) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should continue to work jointly to ensure that women, girls, boys and men are included in all levels of decision-making processes; their rights are upheld; and their different needs, vulnerabilities and capabilities are effectively integrated

into preparedness, response and recovery efforts; and, in particular, actors should recognize and accord priority to access to sexual and reproductive health services and information and programmes that prevent and respond to gender-based violence;

(s) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should provide the human and financial resources necessary to deliver programmes responsive to the different and context-specific needs of affected people, including by ensuring the systematic collection, analysis and use of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability, and by according priority to funding gender equality and the use of the gender marker;

(t) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should strengthen accountability to affected people and ensure a coordinated approach for community engagement, including by promoting inclusive and active community participation in decision-making; collecting, aggregating and analysing community feedback to influence decision-making processes; and providing transparent and accessible information to affected communities;

(u) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should systematically support and invest in local and national capacity and actors in preparedness and response activities, including by increasing financing to local and national actors, including women's groups;

(v) Member States, the United Nations, humanitarian and development organizations and other relevant actors should intensify efforts to respond to and prevent the rising global food insecurity affecting millions of people, especially those at risk of famine, including by enhancing humanitarian development cooperation and providing urgent and adequate funding;

(w) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian and development actors should operationalize the new way of working to achieve collective outcomes in order to reduce risk, need and vulnerability, through joint analysis, multi-year joined-up planning and programming, depending on context and drawing on the comparative strengths of diverse actors, in a manner that fully respects humanitarian principles, and thereby contribute towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda; and should establish benchmarks for progress and be supported by multi-year funding;

(x) Member States and other relevant actors should intensify their support and increase their contributions for the Central Emergency Response Fund so that it reaches $1 billion by 2018, including through new and additional funding sources, as well as increase the portion of humanitarian appeal funding channelled through United Nations country-based pooled funds to 15 per cent of humanitarian appeal requirements;

(y) Recognizing the critical importance of coordination of international humanitarian assistance, Member States should ensure that adequate and timely resources are provided to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to continue to fulfil the mandate conferred through General Assembly resolution 46/182 and other relevant resolutions of the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council;

(z) Member States, the United Nations and other stakeholders should continue to implement the commitments they made at the World Humanitarian Summit and take forward the transformations reflected in the Agenda for Humanity.